

Attachment I - Additional State Presentations

Minnesota

(Karen Studders, Task Force Member)

In Minnesota 10 primary basins are being worked on. The Pollution Control Agency (PCA) has changed its approach to watershed management over the past 10 years. The PCA is engaging citizens by using them to test waters for clarity. Citizens are also beginning to monitor water quality. Minnesota has far more demand for funds for nonpoint source pollution control than the state and federal funds available, but they have noticed an increased interest in this issue on the part of citizens.

Minnesota has realized that solutions must involve multiple state agencies. Discussion of results is also a strong focus in Minnesota. On the web site, for example, the PCA has to show accountability to citizens for tax dollars spent in the government process.

Environmental indicators are showing that phosphorus loadings are decreasing while nitrogen loadings are increasing dramatically. To date \$350 million has been spent on the Minnesota River Basin. The result is that at 80 percent of the monitoring sites phosphorus shows a decline whereas 75 percent of the sites show an increase in nitrogen. The regulatory scheme is effective for point source pollution. Forty percent of the reduction comes from point sources; 25 percent of the reduction is from nonpoint sources.

The Minnesota River Basin covers one-third of the state. By seeking and getting an appropriation for more than \$80 million for CREP and using the match system, the PCA can tap into \$160 million in federal funds. However Ms. Studders is skeptical of the results that can be gained through these programs because they address nitrogen load generation “after the fact.” Other tools must be considered. Minnesota has done water pollutant trading on a couple of sites. One is Rahr Malting, where biological oxygen demand was the critical issue. The plant’s expansion could happen only through pollutant credit trading between point and nonpoint source dischargers because the river could not tolerate increased nutrient discharges. Another facility was the Southern Minnesota Sugar Beet Cooperative, also a concern for BOD. Trading credits is the way of the future.

States need flexibility to experiment with different approaches. Pages 17 and 18 of the Task Force Action Plan show that the tools already exist. We just need to be more strategic in how to use those resources to address hypoxia. Discussions on the relative benefits of projects should take place. Caution would have to be exercised. States might already have made programmatic commitments and might need to change those commitments to address hypoxia. Federal leadership needs to be aware that states would need help in realizing the changes.

(Mark Dittrich, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Attendee)

Minnesota has a Clean Water Program using MPCA and Section 319. The state involves agencies and tribes, mixing funds and distributing them to priority areas in the state. Some \$45million in State Revolving Funds is used to target nonpoint source pollution, conservation tillage, and so forth. The Watershed Heroes conference sponsored by the American Farm Bureau looks at cutting-edge practices and products that farmers are interested in to protect their crops and the environment.

Arkansas

(Earl Smith, Task Force)

In addition to Nutrient Management Plans, along with Cooperative Extension, the state is undertaking training on utilization, cost-sharing with Section 319 programs, and offering state income tax credits for wetland restoration and buffer strips (more politically expedient than funding).

Mississippi

(Phil Bass, Task Force)

Using a nutrient task force of experts (primarily from agriculture), Mississippi is developing nutrient criteria by the EPA-established deadline. Mississippi has a good working relationship with agricultural interests at both the state and federal levels.

The Yazoo River Basin contributes the greatest load to the Mississippi River. There is a great deal of diversification in the basin's agriculture; for example, catfish farming is taking root. Although catfish farming does not have significant environmental impacts, EPA is currently developing effluent limitations guidelines for aquaculture and one of the repercussions could be that farmers revert back to row-crop agriculture. That would be a step backward for the environment and the state of Mississippi. One ongoing pilot project, the Lower Yazoo Partnership, is a large-scale reforestry project for the marginal farmlands in the lower Yazoo Basin. This project will be tied into initiatives to create some eco-tourism in the area as well.

Missouri

(Joe Engeln, Task Force)

Missouri has a 10 percent sales tax for park development and soil resource control. The state once led the nation in soil erosion, but it has achieved dramatic improvements by allocating resources to address this issue. The state also has used resources for soil mapping (useful for producers) and for agencies helping producers identify appropriate best management practices. The National Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership, established by a group of federal agencies in 1999, exists in five states and will soon take root in Missouri.

Missouri proposed a separate Water Division in the Department of Natural Resources. The state identifies that monitoring and research are tied to water quality improvement methods. Agriculture and Natural Resources are beginning to discuss how best to work together to help producers get the information they need regarding what they can do to help the environment.

Wisconsin

(Bruce Baker, Task Force)

The key is figuring out where to use available resources with respect to the hypoxia/nutrient problem. More state dollars than federal monies are being used in the nonpoint source program, which has been growing over 20 years. The biggest question is how to prioritize rather than getting basic funding.